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ABSTRACT

This report examines the patterns of academic performance and withdrawal rate of first-time freshmen students at Santa Ana College (SAC) in the Fall 1972 semester and compares them to patterns found for the same kind of students at 32 other California community colleges during the same semester. Results indicate that SAC students had lower GPA's and higher course withdrawal and college drop-out rates than students at the other colleges studied. Fifty-seven percent of the SAC students withdrew during the semester or discontinued their enrollment for the next semester, as compared to 40 percent of the students at all colleges studied. Interestingly, SAC students who discontinued their enrollment after one semester had higher GPA's than SAC students who continued and higher than students who discontinued their enrollment at the other colleges. Although SAC full-time students withdrew from individual courses more often than SAC part-time students, they were more apt to re-enroll the next semester. SAC's part-time students tended to have a higher college drop-out rate than part-time students in the other colleges studied. Also, SAC issued fewer No Credit grades than the 32 other colleges. (DC)

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE AT THE FRESHMAN AND TRANSFER LEVELS BETWEEN STUDENTS ATTENDING SANTA ANA COLLEGE AND THIRTY-TWO OTHER CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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INTRODUCTION

This study was undertaken to determine what are the demographic implications rendered by the juxtoposition of student performance at Santa Ana College to student performance at thirty-two other California Community Colleges. The report will attempt to discover if Santa Ana College students' academic performance is similar to that of students in other parts of California. If there are similarities, an attempt will be made to determine what, if any, conclusions may be drawn from the conclusion. Conversely, attempts will be made to bare dissimilarities that exist between Santa Ana College students and thirty-two other state community colleges.

Hopefully, this study will give some insight into the grade distribution, rates of withdrawal, and the nature of those students who persist, comparatively, from college to college. Medsker has said:

> The data from several institutions in this study show that attrition tended to be greater following an increase in grade point average for the group. This, of course, suggests that there are other reasons why transfer students (as well as natives) drop out of college. The lower socioeconomic background of many Junior College students may mean that motivational and financial factors contribute to their high attrition.[1]

Obviously, not all attrition can be blamed on socioeconomic factors. As is well known, if a community college is serving its function, a very large percentage of its students enroll for reasons other than to prepare for transfer to a

four-year institution. Many students take courses to enhance their positions in the world of work. Consequently, once they have satisfied their needs, they may see no necessity to remain in school. This report also analyzes the effect that students who withdraw from some courses, but do not withdraw from college completely, has on the overall withdrawal rate for the institution.

It is impossible to assess the benefits accruing to students who withdraw from some classes and persist through the term. However, the costs to the state and the community are the same for credits earned and units attempted (units enrolled in after census week) for which no credit is awarded. If early withdrawals are eliminated for which no state support is provided, the ratio of units attempted to units completed by students who withdrew during or did not persist beyond the first term of enrollment has been found to be 3 to 1 for the sample studies. The ratio for the student who completed the fall term but did not persist was found to be 1.7 units attempted to each unit completed. The latter ratio does not take into account the units attempted by students who withdrew from all classes with no credit earned.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

As America attempts to provide access to all students with its open door policy, it will encounter many new problems because of the new student in higher education. One of its major problems will be that of attrition. In the community college an attempt has been made to deal with the two-year college dropout. Cohen says:

> "The sensitivity of students to the value system of a society that condemns dropping out is hinted at even if half-facetiously, in the remark of one student: "If you quit school after your bachelor's degree, you're a dropout."

Student attrition rates are not sterile statistics. They reflect the extinguished hopes of young people deprived of the opportunities and advantages of a higher education. And so we ask, with a deep sense of concern -- "why do they leave?"

In an institutional research report, Blai (1969) notes... "For a college, its 'retention rate' (defined as the percentage of entering freshmen who graduate on schedule with their respective classes) is more than a simple statistic. Loss of students is a costly phenomenon to the institution even though some of those 'lost' to the college do transfer to other institutions and complete degree programs.

"Considering the amount of time, energy and money spent in the recruitment-admissions process, the problem of attrition in each class prior to graduation cannot be ignored. And, since a 'low' retention rate may have implications for institutional actions --

in such areas as curriculum evaluation, admission and student-faculty relations -- this type of 'statistic' reflects a state of affairs which is important on academic as well as 'economic' grounds...

"Considering the 'cost' of attrition to the college, a careful examination of the scope, nature and general efficacy of counseling and advisory services (academic and personal), in connection with the withdrawal phenomenon, appears pragmatically worthwhile. ...The problem faced by students in meeting the academic-social-cultural pressures which are characteristic of college life in a selective, residential context, and the extent to which students succeed in responding to these pressures unquestionably affects their adjustment and may consequently result in their becoming a dropout statistic...." (Blai, 1969)

"In a study conducted by the College Research Center (CRC) in the late 1960's, (a cooperative, educational-research agency of 4-year liberal arts colleges for women) among five of its members institutions; Hollins, Mount Holyoke, Sweet Briar, Vassar and Wheaton, the following were the reasons cited for withdrawal from college. In addition, the tabulation also summarizes for 1967 and 1969 the reasons given for second year non-return among Harcum Junior College (a two-year, private, independent junior college for women) first year students who had been invited to return for a second year of study but declined the invitation.

		Harcum	
Reasons	CRC	1969	1967
1 - Marriage	31%	6%	8%

2 - Desired subjects not in curriculum	28%		
3 - Academic difficulties	24%		
4 - Difficulty in adjustm't to coll. life	21%	6%	
5 - Lack of goals or interests	20%		
6 - School calibre not as high as expected	18%	4%	25%
7 - Discovery of specl. talent or interest	16%	3%	5%
8 - Finances	16%	9%	5%
9 - Insuff. high school preparation	11%		
10 - Medical reasons (personal)	11%	4%	1%
11 - College didn't make much sense	10%	3%	1%
12 - Pushed into college by parents	10%		
13 - Drop out to work for awhile	9%		
14 - No real desire to attend college	7%		
15 - Medical reason (family)	4%	1%	2%
16 - Full-time employment	2%	1%	
17 - No reply to follow-up inquiry		60%	55%
18 - Transfer to 4-year college		18%	19%
19 - Girls snobbish		3%	1%
20 - Did not like location		1%	2%

Excluding the 'no replies', the most frequently offered reason among the Harcum respondents was "Transfer to 4-year college." This 'springboard' to further education as a 'feeder' two-year college is a vital educational function which Harcum and other two-year colleges afford to many students who might otherwise never enjoy the opportunity for continuing their collegiate education to the baccalaureate degree level.

Among the CRC respondents, excluding marriage, the frequency with which the next three listed reasons for withdrawal are mentioned (73%) may be roughly equated to the 60% and 55% of Harcum non-replies which presumably suggest a dissatisfaction or disinterest in Harcum sufficiently great for them not to even make the effort to reply to the brief mail questionnaire.

These results generally parallel the findings of a national survey of retention-withdrawal patterns by Iffert (1958) which revealed, in descending order of ranked importance:

1st = "I was generally dissatisfied"

Co-equal 2nd = Change in curricular interest, &
Lack of interest in studies
Co-equal 3rd = Desire to be nearer home, &
Desire to attend a less expensive institution

Among women who "discontinued" their schooling, Iffert (1958) reported the most frequently offered reason to be "marriage" the other leading items being: taking a full-time job; financial difficulties, and lack of interest in studies. Slightly more than a fifth (23%) of the women cited "low grades" in contrast to 40% of the men.

Several action-oriented lines of inquiry into the attrition problem are worthy of careful consideration, including the following which have been suggested by knoell (1960): "Efforts to identify likely dropouts by securing periodic self-reports of intentions and motivations; noting behavior which may be symptomatic of attrition, such as excessive cutting of classes, infractions of rules, and repeated visits to the health center; flagging records of entering students with particular syndromes of characteristics associated with attrition.

"Analysis of the process of decision-making about attrition--where it is clearly the choice of the student:

(1) Are there peak times during the semester (year) when students think seriously about dropping out?
(2) With whom do they talk about it?
(3) Who appears to influence their thinking about attrition?
(4) When does the final decision tend to be made?
(5) What kinds of incidents trigger the final decision?
(6) What is the time-lag between the preliminary thinking and the dicision, and the decision and the action?
(7) What point in time seems best for taking preventive action?"

As Blai (1971, Sept.) notes... "The holding powet of a junior college is one of the significant indices of its effectiveness."

As revealed by an action-oriented inquiry into student attrition at Harcum Junior College in the Spring of 1970, reported by Blai (1970); through an analysis of 4 types of indicative records, it was ascertained that some 83% of those students who withdrew during the academic year were "flagged" by being among one of the following four groups"

(1) first year students requesting a transcript be sent to another college
(2) those in potential academic jeopardy, as revealed by their mid-term record of very low or failing grades
(3) those earning Incomplete grades at mid-term
(4) all provisionally-accepted freshmen.

A program of preventive dropout counseling was instituted, beginning in academic 1970-71. This focused upon potential dropouts by systematic counseling of: (1) those students who were potential out-transfers as revealed by their requests for transcripts, (2) to avoid, wherever possible, later academic dismissal of students in potential jeopardy, as revealed by their mid-term, progress report grades, (3) to avoid possible dropout of students with Incomplete mid-term grades, (4) to minimize dropout propensity-accepted academically-weak students.

As is noted by Blai (1971, Sept.), the student withdrawal rate during academic 1970-71 was 6% (expressed as a percentage of the total student body at the beginning of the year), as compared with 11% during academic 1969-70. It is also a fact that during Sept. - January of academic 1971-72, the rate remained a low 3.4%, as well as the like period during academic 1970-71 when the rate was also a low 3.2%. This substantial and sustained improvement in student attrition is associated with the introduction of an expanded counseling-interviewing program designed to pinpoint and

'salvage' potential dropouts.

"The matter of dropping out of college, with its widespread ramifications in the educational and social realms, transcends the merely personal psychology of the individual. It is a phenomenon that highlights the ancient struggle between the environment and the individual striving to modify the other in ways as complex as life itself, until a better balance is achieved....If examination of...(the) interaction (between the environment and the individual) discloses elements of ignorance or extremism on both sides, more rooted in emotionalism than in calm objectivity, perhaps the dropout may be less widely included among the failures, delinquents, and other undesirables." (Pervin, Reik, Dalrymple, 1966. p. 3)

"Concerns with the phenomenon of dropout have nationwide implications While the differential between entrants and graduates is highest in California public institutions, even in selective colleges throughout the nation, there is always a small group of intellectually well-equipped students who select themselves out after having been selected in, who drop out for a time, only to return and graduate later. This raises a question of the desirability of selective admissions because whether such people resent a college more if they flunk out than if they are refused admission we do not know." (Cohen & Brawer, 1970. p. 14)

Numerous references to student attrition are to be found, both in educational and psychological literature. In fact, Knoell (1966) has observed that attrition has stimulated so many investigations that they may "soon rival college prediction studies in sheer numbers." Representative ones have dealt with dropouts in

terms of personal and social situations - Iffert (1951, 1952), Strang (1937), Suddarth (1957), Summerskill and Darling (1955): academic achievement - Dressel (1943), Feder (1940), Weigand (1951): specific schools, Blai (1971, July), Eckland (1964), Pervin, Reik and Dalrymple (1966): adjustment - Freedman (1956), Munroe (1945), Pervin, Reik and Dalrymple (1966): illness and injury Iffert (1957), Lerner & Martin (1955): finances - Cooper (1928), Gable (1957), Thompson (1953), and "motivation" -- Farnsworth et al (1955), Rust & Ryan (1955).

Trent and Medsker (1968. p. 176) indicate that autonomy most differentiated the college persister group from the withdrawals and, especially, from the non-college attenders, for they note, ... "a strong relationship between entrance to and length of stay in college and growth of open-minded, flexible and autonomous dispositions as measured by....scales designed to assess these trails. The fact that the carefully classified college withdrawals were more like the nonattenders than the persisters in their amount of manifest change, indicates that the type of personality development measured continues to be associated with persistence in college beyond the early years. This held, regardless of level of ability or socioeconomic status."

As reported by Cohen & Brawer (1970, pp. 16, 17), "Other findings suggested that family climates of the persisters were different from those of withdrawals and nonattenders. Nearly 70 percent of the high school seniors who later became college persisters reported, while they were still in high school, that

their parents definitely wanted them to attend college. This may be compared with the less than 50 percent withdrawals and less than 10 percent nonattenders who stated similar family interest...

"Despite considerable research on the college dropout, few investigations especially concerned junior college populations. In fact, much of the work on junior college students remains in the files of the particular institutions that initiated the investigations."

The purposes of the student attrition study reported by Cohen and Brawer, (1970, pp. 29,30) .. "were to provide data for (1) enhancing the accuracy of predictions for student attrition; (2) adjusting counseling procedures; (3) encouraging junior college instructors to define their objectives more precisely for their students, and (4) developing hypotheses for identifying potential dropouts.

"The hypothesis tested was that there are significant personality, ability and/or demographic differences among individuals who persist in college and individuals who withdraw before completing their school programs...the null hypothesis of no difference between persisters and dropouts was tested for each relevant item by Chi-square. Significant differences were as follows:

(1) Dropouts showed a tendency to be enrolled for fewer than 12 units whereas persisters tended to be enrolled for 22 units or more. (X^2 = 10.56, p.01)

(2) Dropouts tended to be employed more time outside school than persisters. (X^2 = 20.05, p .01)

(3) Dropouts tended to have attended more schools prior to the 10th grade than did persisters. (X^2 = 12/65, p .05)

(4) The mothers of dropouts tended to have less education than those of the persisters; specifically, more mothers of

dropouts did not complete high school. (X^2 = 12.93, p .05)...

"Twelve semester units is generally considered to be a minimal load for a full-time student in the junior college. Since dropouts tended to be enrolled for fewer than 12 units, it is suggested that they are less committed to full-time school work, and, hence are more inclined to leave school when conditions within the college become unpleasant or impinge on other activities, e.g., their jobs. It also suggests - as does much of the literature-- that withdrawal from the junior college is related to financial pressures. Dropouts reported more time spent in outside employment than persisters. Such employment may well reflect financial need, but since this variable was not definitely established for this sample, its influence is uncertain....

"Dropouts may be less committed than persisters, but they may be more realistic. Seven instructors taught sections of English 1. For purposes of this study, individual student grades were computed by section and the instructors ranked according to average marks given in their English 1 sections.

A correlation of +.71 (p .05) was found to result when the statement, "The higher the grades given by an instructor, the lower the number of students who drop his classes," was tested. An implication of this finding is that many students drop out of classes -- and indeed, drop out of school -- when they realize they are in a precarious position regarding grades."

It was found that students who do not complete four years of college come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, have lower

level of initial educational aspiration than do students who complete four years of college. An analysis of the effects of 36 college characteristics on student persistence in college was performed. After controlling statistically for differential student input to the various college environments, 21 significant college effects were observed. It was suggested that students are more likely to complete four years if they attend colleges where student peer relationships relationships are characterized by friendliness, cooperativeness, and independence, where there is a high level of personal involvement with the concern for the individual student, and where the administrative policies concerning student aggression are relatively permissive.

A very recently released study, Astin (1972), indicates that by the most severe measures of persistence -- completing a baccalaureate degree within four years -- 53% of all students entering four-year colleges and universities can be classified as dropouts (based on data obtained from 217 two-year and four-year colleges and universities over a four year period beginning in 1966. At two-year colleges, approximately 62% did not receive a degree, Astin concluding the higher dropout rates at junior colleges are..."primarily attributable to the lower level of motivation and poorer academic preparation of students entering these colleges."

Astin reports among the predictors of lack of persistence or dropout propensity, (in desending order of importance): (1) plans to marry while in college, (2) holding a job during the

academic year, (3) smoking cigarettes, (4) being a female, (5) turning in a paper or theme late, and (6) having no religious preference.

Turner (1970), in what he terms a limited survey of attrition in community colleges, concludes from his survey of literature that several student-related and college-related factors appear to influence discontinuance at junior colleges. He indicates that recent research reports on student attrition have questioned academic aptitude as a predictor of perseverance at college, and thus other factors are sought to explain who drops out and why. He indicates that student-related factors involve: (1) an interplay of actual and perceived ability, (2) family and school background, and (3) motivation. The college-related factors begin with: (1) the student's introduction to the school, and (2) depends on his adjustment to faculty, curriculum and school mores. He concludes that a closer link between community colleges and secondary schools would be an initial step in decreasing college dropout rates, and that student personnel programs and instutional preparation are other areas that need improvement.

Snyder and Blocker (1970) report in a profile of non-persisting students at Harrisburg Area Community College (Penna.) that approximately 30% of the students indicated positive reasons for discontinuing their attendance without having earned an associate degree or certificate (their objective had been completed; about 25% indicated negative reasons (there were barriers to continuance); and about 50% indicated neutral areas. The four most frequently specified reasons were: (1) to attend another college; (2) to enter the armed services; (3) to become employed, and (4) objectives completed.

Research fails to highlight the student who drops out after completing a vocational or certificate program in the community college. These students are viewed as dropouts or non-persistors, when they are really successful by virtue of the fact of being trained for a profession or vocation.

Gold (1970) reports a study of Los Angeles City College attrition, examining characteristics of 397 randomly selected students. More important findings included:

(1) those students scoring in the lowest quintile on School and College Abilities Test showed considerably less persistence after their first semester.

(2) Females recorded higher persistence rates than males.

(3) Ethnically, Blacks and Spanish-surname students persisted at a rate slightly (but not significantly) below rates for all students, while orientals persisted and obtained AA degrees at a significantly higher rate.

(4) A comparison of this study with the NORCAL project, a larger-scale study involving 23 northern California junior colleges, showed similar results.

Berg (1965) in a study designed to evaluate factors bearing on the persistence of low ability in four California junior colleges found a varying persistence rate (40% remaining through the fourth semester at one college; 17% at another). He concludes that such colleges, especially the counselors,

must change their approach and attitude if they are to provide a successful experience for low-ability students. The entire concept of educational opportunities for all must include significant and serious efforts on their behalf.

Weigel (1969) studied persisting and non-persisting male students at Anoka-Ramsey State Junior College (Minnesota), in a comparison utilizing non-intellective measures. Chi-square tests for significance at the .05 level were applied with the following results:

(1) No significant response differences were noted on general information items.

(2) The persisters differed significantly from non-persisters in selecting the following more often:

(a) "preparation for a better paying job," and

(b) "encouragement by people outside the college," as reasons for attending a junior college.

(3) Appraisals of the college's services and environment showed:

(a) persisters significantly more negative about a required general orientation course.

(b) persisters more positive (significantly) about:

(1) instructor assistance

(2) campus recreational facilities

(3) emphasis on cultural and intellectual pursuits outside of class.

(4) The two reasons most often selected for leaving college were:

(a) "that another school would offer more of what I was interested in,"

(b) "a general feeling of not getting anywhere."

Today, more and more administrators express concern that perhaps dropping out is not entirely the "wrong" move for the reluctant student. Behind the pressure to persist in college is the American success syndrome. For many American parents, "success" is equated with a house in the suburbs after a 'successful" college education experience. Consequently, they "pressure" vigorously for these goals and consider anything short of them to be failure. More than one college dean has heard reports of parents who engage in bribery (a ski trip; a trip to the islands; a new car), to "influence" their offspring to go after that all-important sheepskin degree.

Dr. Robert W. Pitcher, co-author of "Why College Students Fail" find that many of today's teenagers do not evidence the strong motivational level of their parents. He believes the adolescent's motivation and persistence are slow to develop because ... "they are frequently over-protected by people who want them to have everything they didn't have -- such children have never really heard 'no'."

It is the duty of those in higher education to assist all students in identifying and assessing their individual goals without personal bias. There is a tremendous amount of talent in both the persistors and non-persistors.

As mentioned earlier, all non persistors are not necessarily dropouts, there is a great need for further study on the success and failure of the nonpersistors because many have been successful.

Summarizing the findings and conclusions of the various attrition studies and investigations cited in this literature review, the following facts emerge:

Cohen and Brower (1970) state that:

(1) Dropouts show a tendency to be enrolled for fewer than 12 units; persisters 12 units or more.

(2) Dropouts tended to be employed more time outside school than persisters.

(3) Dropouts tended to have attended more schools prior to the 10th grade than did persisters.

(4) Mothers of dropouts tended to have less education than mothers of persisters.

(5) 70% of college persisters report parents urged college attendance. (Less than 50% among withdrawals and 10% among non-attendance.)

(6) Dropouts were more inclined to leave school when conditions impinge upon job or outside related pressures.

Astin (1972) states the principal predictors of persistence in two and four year colleges are:

(1) grades in high school

(2) scores on tests of academic ability

(3) being a non-smoking male

(4) not being employed during academic year

(5) have high level aspirations upon college entrance

(6) showing a religious preference

(7) financing one's college education chiefly through parental aid, scholarships or personal savings.

Principal predictors of non-persistence in two and four year colleges are:

(1) plans to marry while in college

(2) holding a job during academic year

(3) smoking cigarettes

(4) being female

(5) turning in paper or theme late

(6) having no religious preference

Major reasons for leaving four year colleges are:

Male		Female
27%	(1) Dissatisfied with college environment	27%
26%	(2) Wanted time to reconsider goals/interests	18%
24%	(3) Could not afford cost	18%
22%	(4) Changed career plans	21%
16%	(5) Academic record unsatisfactory	6%
11%	(6) Tired of being a student	6%

Students who do not complete four years

(1) come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds

(2) have lower grades in high school

(3) have lower level of initial educational aspirations, than do students who complete four years.

Gold (1970) in his study found the following about dropouts:

(1) that the lower the SCAT score the more likely the student would be a lower persister

(2) Males had lower persistence than females

(3) Black and Spanish-surnamed persisted slightly less than rate for combined group

Abstracting from the various studies, the following tendencies and characteristics (in no particular order) appear to "profile" the college non-persister, as contrasted with the persister:

(1) Employed more time outside school

(2) More enroll in school as part-timers

(3) Attend more schools prior to 10th grade

(4) More often attend private, church-related and co-ed schools than other types of junior colleges

(5) Lower high school GPA

(6) Lack of proximity to college

(7) Seek transfers to 4-year colleges

(8) Find institution calibre not as high as expected

(9) Desired subjects not in curriculum

(10) Experience academic difficulty

(11) Lack of goals or college-oriented interests

(12) "General" dissatisfaction

(13) Marriage

(14) Lack of interest in subjects.

(15) Lack of open-minded, flexible and autonomous disposition

(16) Fewer parents urge college attendance

(17) Financial pressures

(18) Lower normative congruence

(19) Lower friendship support

(20) Lower social integration

(21) Lesser institutional commitment

(22) Want time to reconsider interests and goals

(23) Changed career plans

(24) Come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds

(25) Have lower initial educational aspirations

(26) Smoke cigarettes

(27) Being female

(28) Turning in paper or theme late

(29) Having no religious preference

(30) Health problems

(31) Family problems

In the education process a student should take from it whatever is needed that will help him manipulate and control his environment. Individuals should not be evaluated on longevity or length of study based upon the number of years completed.

The researchers feel after completing this study that there is a need for further study to find out more about the success and failures of the persisters as well as non-persisters.

PROCEDURES

A comparative study was made involving 32,000 students at thirty-two California Community Colleges selected randomly by the State of California Coordinating Council for Higher Education to determine performance and persistence of students. A chi-square test was used to determine if there is significant difference between the percentage of Santa Ana College students withdrawing from courses in a given semester and the percentages of students at thirty-two other California Community Colleges. Analysis was conducted to determine who are the students who account for the bulk of withdrawal statistics by contacting the subject colleges' admissions offices.

The report also attempts to establish a relationship between grade distribution and withdrawal rates at the various colleges. This was accomplished by gathering attendance (persistence), and grade point average data from the various colleges used in the study.

RESULTS

From the data presented in this report several conclusions have been drawn. To begin, it was stated that the grade distribution for letter grades for all Santa Ana College students in the sample is different from the grade distribution representing students in the other community colleges. In Table 4 this conclusion was strengthened by the data in that table. In Table 4 it was noticed that Santa Ana College students receive more "C's" and fewer "A's" than similar students in the thirty-two other community colleges. This led to reaffirm the findings in Table 3 that Santa Ana College students have lower grade point averages than the other community college students. One peculiar observation was discovered from studying Table 3 - that Santa Ana College freshmen who discontinue their enrollment after one semester earn higher grade point averages than freshmen students who continue their enrollment into the next term.

Secondly, it can be concluded that the Santa Ana College students studied in this report have a higher rate of withdrawal than their fellow students of the other thirty-two community colleges. It was discovered that 19 percent of those students who enrolled in classes during the Fall term of 1972 dropped all their classes and completely withdrew from the college. The state average was 18 percent. Also, Santa Ana College had a higher rate of non-continuance by its students who completed the term but did not enroll in the next semester. Santa Ana College's rate was 38 percent as compared to 22 percent for the state. Totally, 40 per-

cent of the students in California's community colleges withdrew during the term or discontinued their enrollment for the next term. For Santa Ana College students, 57 percent of the students enrolled discontinued or totally withdrew from the college. In part 3 of the Council's report it was stated that Santa Ana College's rate of withdrawal and discontinuance was the highest among all the colleges included in the sample.[2]

When all students (Freshmen, Sophmores, etc.) enrolled at Santa Ana College are considered, the continuance rate for all students is 60 percent from the Fall term of 1972 into the Spring of 1973. This is shown in Table 6. Notice that the lowest rate of continuance is among students who have completed 14.5 units or less. This would tend to support the high rate of discontinuance that the study found among Santa Ana College freshmen, transfer, and other first-time students.

One final note on the rates of withdrawals. The study found that full-time students have a higher rate of withdrawals than part-time. Full-time students accounted for almost three-fourths of the withdrawals from particular courses although not from the college. Even though full-time students withdrew from more courses than other students, they do possess the lowest rate of non-persistence. It could be concluded that the rate of non-persistence decreased as a function of the number of units for which students are enrolled.

Exactly why Santa Ana College's first-time students enrolled part-time tend to have a higher rate of non-persistence tha- students in the other colleges in the state is not fully clear.

It could possibly be that Santa Ana College is enticing students to enroll in classes for purposes other than pursuing an A.A. degree or as preparatory work for purposes of transfer to a four year university. In other words the college is serving the needs of the community, which is the true purpose of a community college.

A special note should be made that the statistics in this report are concerned only with freshmen, transfer students, persisters, non-persisters, and total first-time students. Continuing students are not included in this study. Thus, no assumptions should be made concerning these students on the basis of the data presented in this report.

From the study comparing first-time Santa Ana College freshmen and transfer students with the same type of students at thirty-two other community colleges in California during the Fall and Spring of 1972-73, three major differences should be noted. First, the data in Table 1 indicates that Santa Ana College issued fewer No Credit (NCR) grades than the other thirty-two community colleges. Second, as shown in Table 3, forty-three percent of the first-time students at Santa Ana College continued into the Spring 1973 semester as compared to sixty percent of first-time students at the other thirty-two community colleges. Also, it should be pointed out that New Freshmen who discontinued at Santa Ana College had a grade point average of 2.66 as compared to a 2.08 grade point average for students at the other thirty-two community colleges. Third,

a study of Table 4 shows that two percent of those students who carried 1-3 units and continued into the Spring 1973 semester at Santa Ana College earned below a "D" average as compared to eleven percent of the same type of students at the other thirty-two community colleges.

ANALYSES OF TABLES

A. Table 1

Table 1 of the present report shows the distribution of first term course grades for freshmen and transfer students, persisters and non-persisters, and total first time students. The columns in the table compare Santa Ana College students to students of the thirty-two colleges in the Council's study.

Although the percentage distributions of Santa Ana College and California community colleges seem to be very close to each other in every column, a Chi-square Goodness of Fit test shows that the Santa Ana College grade distribution is significantly different from the population distribution. But a further Chi-square test on only the traditional (credit) letter grades (A,B, C,D,F) does show that the Santa Ana College grade distribution is from the population statistics in every column. This means that the distribution of (credit) grades achieved by Santa Ana College students is the same as those achieved by students in other California community colleges. Any differences are due to sampling errors.

The probable reason for this close relationship is the more "general concensus" and the historical standards that have been developed in the assigning of credit grades by faculty members. Historical tradition does not seem to have developed yet for the newer type of grades (CR, NCR, etc.), as well as the fact that the regulations governing the assigning of these grades vary from institution to institution. These reasons could lead to

the rejection of the hypothesis that Santa Ana College students are similar to California community college students for all grade types.

B. Table 2

Table 2, Percentage of Student Receiving Passing Grades and Withdrawing from Classes, shows that almost three-fourths of the grades received by Santa Ana College students who completed the Fall term 1972 were passing grades, and that 79 percent of the grades earned by Santa Ana College students who persisted into the next term were passing. However, among the non-persisters who completed the term, only 51 percent of the grades were passing. In each of these three cases fewer Santa Ana College students received passing grades than students in the other thirty-two community colleges. The difference does not seem to arise from a higher issuance of non-passing grades by Santa Ana College faculty members, but from a hgiher withdrawal rate from classes by Santa Ana College students.

C. Table 3

Data in Table 3 illustrates the differences between students who persisted beyond the first term and those who were enrolled at the end of the term but did not continue the following semester. The students who completely withdrew during the term are not shown in the table since they earned no grades. For Santa Ana College the complete withdrawal group consisted of 19 percent of the total sample. The average for California was 18 percent for this

group. Table 3 also shows that of those students who completed the Fall term, fewer Santa Ana College students continue into the second (Spring 1973) semester than the students at the other thirty-two community colleges. This holds true for all types of students. Also note that differences between the various pairs of grade point averages for students in community colleges other than Santa Ana College who continued (persisters) and discontinued (non-persisters) are all in the direction of higher grades for the persisters. This is not universally true for Santa Ana College students and the differences in grade point average between persisters and non-persisters in significantly smaller than the differences for the other community college students as a whole. The differences are most acute among freshmen at Santa Ana College and freshmen at other community colleges. The first row in Table 3 shows that discontinuing Santa Ana College freshmen earn higher grades than continuing freshmen at Santa Ana College.

D. Table 4

Table 4 is simply a different representation of the mean grade point averages in Table 3. Of particular interest is that Santa Ana College students earn fewer "A's" and more "C's" than students in the other community colleges when comparing students taking 4 or more units.* When comparing students who take 3 or

* A historical grade trend study is now being readied by the Institutional Research Office, that will explore grading patterns at Santa Ana College.

fewer units Santa Ana College students receive higher grades than students in the other community colleges. In general, grades for these types of students tend to be highly skewed toward the grade of "A's".

With Santa Ana College students earning fewer "A's" and more "C's" than their contemporaries in other community colleges in the state, as shown by Table 4, it is more readily understandably why Santa Ana College students' grade point averages are lower than other students in the state. But the reasons why Santa Ana College freshmen who discontinue their enrollment after completing one term earn higher grades than returning freshmen will require further investigation. One possible explanation is that many of the students enroll for reasons other than degree objectives. In other words, these students may enroll for reasons such as personal interest or possible to update or improve their job skills, and have no reasons for continuing their enrollment the following semester. Basically this would indicate that these types of students tend to have higher achievement levels in terms of academic performance and that they have accomplished their goals by completing their courses.

E. Table 5

In Table 5, a Chi-squared test was performed on the data. The Chi-squared statistic did not prove to be significant, and it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the percentage of Santa Ana College students withdrawing from courses during the Fall semester, 1972 and students in other

community colleges who also withdrew during that time period in terms of the number of units attempted. The highest incidence of withdrawal was found to be among students enrolled full-time, who accounted for almost three-fourths of the withdrawals from particular courses although not from college. It appears that many full-time students enroll for more units than they attend or were able to complete and did not withdraw until after the fourth census week. Santa Ana College full-time students (12 or more units) withdrew from courses at an average of a 10.4 percent greater rate than students in the other community colleges. Santa Ana College students attempting 7 to 11 units dropped on the average 35.9 percent more than their fellow students in the other colleges.

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TABLE I

Distribution of First-Term Course Grades
for Freshmen and Transfer Students,
Persisters and Non-Persisters,
and Total First-Time Students

Santa Ana College vs Thirty-Two California Community Colleges

Course Grades*	Type of Student									
	Freshmen		Transfer		Persister		Non-Persister		Total	
	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL
A	17%	18%	26%	28%	21%	22%	13%	14%	19%	20%
B	25	24	25	27	27	26	18	17	25	24
C	24	23	19	18	25	24	15	15	23	22
D	5	5	3	3	5	5	5	4	5	5
F	4	3	6	2	2	2	11	8	5	3
W	18	14	16	13	14	11	30	24	17	14
WF	1	< 1	1	< 1	1	< 1	2	< 1	1	< 1
INC	4	1	2	1	3	1	4	2	3	1
CR	> 1	5	-	3	> 1	5	> 1	3	> 1	5
NCR	> 1	5	1	4	> 1	3	1	11	> 1	5
Other	> 1	1	1	1	> 1	< 1	1	1	> 1	1
N	2591	74390	855	21603	2632	77227	814	18766	3446	95993
%	75%	77%	25%	23%	76%	80%	24%	20%	100%	100%

* W = withdrawal from course without penalty.
WF= withdrawal while failing or for excessive absence.
INC = incompleted course.
CR/NCR = credit or no credit awarded, no effect on grade-point average.
Other = local indicators with no general significance.

The grades of W which were awarded students who withdrew from all classes during the term are not included in the distribution. This group amounted to 18 percent of the sample. The inclusion of such grades would increase the overall percentage of W grades significantly, with a concomitant reduction in letter grades.

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TABLE 2

Percentages of Students Receiving
Passing Grades and Withdrawing
From Classes*

Santa Ana College vs Thirty-Two California Community Colleges

Type of Student	Type of Grade					
	Pass		Withdrew		Other	
	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL
Freshmen	72%	75%	18%	14%	10%	11%
Transfer	74	79	15	13	11	8
Persister	79	82	14	11	7	7
Non-Persister	51	53	30	24	19	23
Total	72%	76%	18%	14%	10%	10%

* Students who withdrew from all classes during the term are not included in the distribution.

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TABLE 3

First-Term Grade-Point Averages
Earned by Various Groups of
Students Who Completed
at Least One Term

Santa Ana College vs Thirty-Two California Community Colleges

Type of Student	Status at End of Term	Percent of Group[1]		Grade-Point Average[3]	
		SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL
Freshmen	Continued	49%	63%	2.63	2.73
	Discontinued	34	20	2.66	2.08
Transfer	Continued	34	51	2.99	3.03
	Discontinued	45	28	2.32	2.65
Part-Time[2]	Continued	39	49	2.80	2.73
	Discontinued	37	27	2.54	2.33
Full-Time[2]	Continued	51	79	2.65	2.75
	Discontinued	40	13	2.45	2.09
Total	Continued	43	60	2.74	2.73
	Discontinued	38	22	2.50	2.31

1. Remainder of the group withdrew during the term without grades.
2. Part-time students were enrolled for fewer than twelve units, full-time for twelve or more units at the fall census week.
3. A = 4.00, B = 3.00, C = 2.00.

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TABLE 4

Distribution of First-Term Grade-Point Averages by Units Attempted
(In Percents)

Santa Ana College vs Thirty-Two California Community Colleges

Grade-Point Average	Units Attempted by Persisters*								Non-Persister	
	1 - 3		4 - 11		12 or More		Total			
	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL
3.5 - 4.0	37%	31%	15%	20%	11%	16%	18%	20%	44%	43%
3.0 - 3.4	30	31	26	22	21	24	25	25		
2.5 - 2.9	3	1	17	17	25	27	17	18	10	6
2.0 - 2.4	23	21	26	25	27	22	26	23	22	19
1.5 - 1.9	-	<1	8	8	12	8	8	7	3	3
1.0 - 1.4	5	4	4	5	3	2	4	4	6	5
Below 1.0	2	11	4	3	>1	<1	2	3	15	24
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percent Attempting Various Loads	22%	19%	39%	42%	39%	39%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Persisters are students who continued into the spring term after first enrolling in the Fall 1972 term. Non-persisters were still enrolled at the end of the fall term but did not continue into the spring.

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TABLE 5

Percentages of Students Withdrawing from Courses During the Fall Term by Total Units Attempted*

Santa Ana College vs Thirty-Two California Community Colleges

Unit Value of All Courses Dropped	Total Units Attempted							
	1 - 6		7 - 11		12 or More		Total	
	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL	SAC	CAL
1 or less	2%	2%	<1%	2%	6%	5%	8%	9%
2 - 3	10	9	6	10	24	26	40	45
4 - 6	<1	1	7	8	21	18	28	27
7 - 11	-	-	3	3	13	11	16	14
12 or more	-	-	-	-	8	5	8	5
Total	12%	12%	16%	23%	72%	65%	100%	100%
N	38	948	52	1877	239	5293	329	8118

* Percentages do not include students who withdrew from all courses during the Fall term, who constitute 18 percent of the sample.

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TABLE 6

Santa Ana College
Permit to Register Percentages
Fall - Spring 1973

Units	Permit	Fall to Spring		
		No.	Cont.	%
60.1 +	1	1477	1070	72
54.6 - 60.0	2	377	306	81
49.6 - 54.5	3	415	333	80
44.6 - 49.5	4	429	345	80
39.6 - 44.5	5	394	326	83
34.6 - 39.5	6	482	376	78
29.6 - 34.5	7	585	494	84
24.6 - 29.5	8	775	620	80
19.6 - 24.5	9	717	557	78
14.6 - 19.5	10	760	551	73
9.6 - 14.5	11	833	562	67
0.0 - 9.5	12	3814	1090	29
TOTAL		11058	6630	60

Source: Admissions and Records, Santa Ana College

to monitor all students who enrolled in vocational or career programs.

6. Santa Ana College should have a counselor assigned to the Admissions and Records Office to perform periodic monitoring of the rate between the persisters and non-persisters.

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